



CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Public Session

Tuesday, 3 March 2009
Victoria Suite, Hilton Cardiff Hotel

Present:	Chair	Dame Yve Buckland
	English Regional Committee Chairs	David Bland Andrea Cook Sir James Perowne
	Wales Committee Chair	Diane McCrea
	Independent Members	Timothy Hornsby Colette Isaaks Narendra Makanji
In attendance:	Secretary to the Board	Mike Jackson
	Head of Corporate Services	Jane Morris
	Head of Policy and Strategy	Nick Ellins
	Head of Consumer Relations	Carl Pegg
	PR09 Programme Manager	Deryck hall
	Policy Manager (Debt Recovery and Vulnerable Groups)	Barbara Leech
	Policy Manager (Wales)	Lia Moutselou
	Policy Manager (Charging and Affordability)	Andrew White

- CB59 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Introduction of Interpreter Actions**
- Apologies were received from Mike Barnes, Charles Howeson, Edward Vidler, Tony Smith and Dave Thompson. There were no declarations of interest.
- Mr. Emlyn Dole was introduced as the Welsh interpreter for the meeting and he explained how to use the equipment.
- CB60 Approval and Receipt of Minutes and Matters Arising: Report on Actioning of Board Decisions**
- 60.1 The minutes of the last Public Board meeting were submitted. The Board Secretary also submitted a report relating to progress in actioning previous Board decisions.
- 60.2 The Chair reported that the 'Away Day' meetings on 11th and 12th May would be held at Victoria Square House in Birmingham and not at the Coombe Abbey Hotel, Coventry. The main subject for discussion at the Seminar would be 'Customer Service'. Members were asked to submit for consideration to the Chair or Board Secretary any names of speakers/facilitators for the event. Board Secretary
- AGREED:** (1) That the minutes of the Public Board Meeting held on 4 November 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed; and
- (2) That with regard to the actioning of Board decisions, the minutes actioned in Schedule 1 to the report be discharged, the position in relation to the outstanding items to be actioned in Schedule 2 be noted and that those ongoing items set out in Schedule 3 be kept under review and reported back to the Board as and when the position changed. Board Secretary
- CB61 Report of the Chair of the Wales Committee on CCWater in Wales**
- 61.1 Diane McCrea, the Chair of the Wales Committee, gave a slide presentation which referred to:
- Details of the membership of the Wales Committee
 - The activities undertaken by CCWater Wales
 - The emerging policy issues on which the Welsh Assembly Government were taking a different view to that in England
 - The issue regarding the supply of water to England
 - The priority given to sustainability and climate change
 - The 'All Wales Forums' which were being extended to include Local Authorities
 - Water quality incidents involving cryptosporidium
 - Details of the Water Industry serving Wales
 - The profile of complaints in Wales
- 61.2 The Wales Committee Chair also reported on the recently published Welsh Assembly Government Strategic Position Statement on Water. CCWater welcomed the creation of the Strategic Statement and considered it to be a valuable foundation for a water and wastewater service that would best serve consumers in Wales, and their

communities. CCWater had prepared a detailed positive response to the Consultation Document which had already been circulated to Board members.

- 61.3 In considering what might be the best arrangements for water representation to meet the needs of consumers in Wales, the Board Chair indicated it might be helpful to identify what consumers in Wales think about water issues from research. Chief Exec.

AGREED: That the Chair of the Wales Committee be thanked for her helpful presentation.

CB62 Forward Work Programme 2009/10 to 2011/12 and Operational Business Plan 2009/10

62.1 The above Forward Work Programmes (FWPs) for the next three years and draft Operational Business Plans (OBPs) for 2009/10 for England and Wales were submitted for approval.

62.2 The draft FWPs went out for public consultation at the end of last year and reflected what matters concerned consumers most. The consultation ended on 20th February 2009.

62.3 The main change to the draft FWPs was the removal of the Redress Scheme as agreed at the Board meeting on 12th January.

62.4 Members made a number of detailed suggestions to improve the final draft document. For example, the deliverables should be made more measurable. There was a need to check whether the data was available to enable issues to be tracked effectively. It was also suggested that the targets in the OBP could perhaps be made more stretching.

62.5 Among other points made were:

- To make sure up-to-date quotes were used
- The need to check dates
- To have a spread of quotes with no concentration on a particular area or company
- The need to bring update the document using the terminology used in the Welsh Assembly Government Strategic Position Statement on Water
- The need to include key areas from the Risk Register

AGREED: That the FWPs and OBPs for England and Wales be approved and finalised, subject to the above comments being taken into account. Chief Exec.

CB63 Budget for 2009/10

63.1 The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee reported on the proposed budget for 2009/10. A report on the proposals recommended by the Executive Team was submitted which had also been considered by the Resources and Finance Committee on 2nd March.

63.2 A budget of £6,655,378 was proposed which reflected the reduction of RPI from 5% to 3%. The budget included £191k contingency and there was also a forecast underspend of 2% to 3%. Thus the total contingency available was in the order of £350k.

- 63.3 A list of key initiatives was included in the paper amounting to some £223k but because of the uncertainty these would be phased in so only £153k would be committed initially.
- 63.4 Expenditure would be closely monitored to avoid a build up at year end.
- 63.5 It was suggested that Appendix B be clarified so as to distinguish Complaints expenditure from that relating to Policy and Strategy.
- 63.6 The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee recommended that the Budget as proposed in the report be approved.

AGREED: (1) That the budget for 2009/10 amounting to £6,655,378 as proposed in the report be approved;

(2) That the Licence fee be restricted to the RPI increase;
and

(3) That the budget be allocated in accordance with Annex A in the report.

CB64 Finance Report up to February 2009

- 64.1 The Finance Report provided a summary of financial performance from 1st April 2008 to 31st January 2009. It had previously been considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee who had both agreed to receive the report.
- 64.2 The report indicated a slight underspend of £34,951 against the revenue budget and £4k in relation to capital.

AGREED: That the contents of the report be noted.

CB65 Price Review 2009 Update

- 65.1 The PR09 Programme Manager reported on the Ofwat Capital Incentive Scheme and the joint stakeholder Consumer Research project.
- 65.2 The effect on companies of Business rates had been raised at Quadripartite meetings and required further investigation. Companies were also seeking more financial cover on pensions.

- AGREED:** (1) That Regional Chairs and the Wales Committee Chair obtain information locally on the likely impact on companies of rates and the uniform business rate; Cttee. Chairs/ Policy Managers
- (2) That the information be collated centrally with a view to CCWater raising the issue with Government so as to avoid any increased costs being passed to customers. PR09 Programme Manager/ Board Chair
- (3) That the report be noted and the PR09 Programme Manager and his colleagues be thanked for their efforts.

CB66 Customer Satisfaction Strategy

- 66.1 The Head of Consumer Relation submitted his report detailing progress to date in increasing consumer satisfaction. More recent figures had shown continuing improvement.
- 66.2 The first trial of a phone survey in December 2008 indicated a customer satisfaction level of 79%, the results of the January survey were currently being analysed and the third wave figures would be available at the end of the month.
- 66.3 Considerable progress had been made in sharing workloads across England and Wales. TAP had enabled the electronic transfer of cases between offices. 2,855 cases had been transferred to date. The inter-office variance in caseload per case handler had reduced from 55 to about 10. There had been a significant drop in the overall caseload and in the backlog.
- 66.4 Training initiatives had been undertaken. For example, Consumer Relations staff had been on an effective negotiating skills course and a course on managing consumer expectations.
- 66.5 Members congratulated the Head of Customer Relations and his team on the considerable progress made. There was some concern by the Welsh Chair about whether standards could be maintained given the overall significant increase in workload in the local Welsh office.

It was considered that staff should be trained and encouraged not to act as 'post boxes' but to be more investigative and give a CCWater view on a complaint.

The Chair of the Northern Committee also highlighted the amount of time she was spending on Chair reviews. The Board Chair indicated she would look at the workload situation with the Chair concerned. Board Chair

- AGREED:**
- (1) That the Customer Relations Team be congratulated on the progress made to date and for their flexibility in handling complaints from other regions; Head of Consumer Relations
 - (2) That staff be monitored to identify any deterioration in quality in complaint handling as a result of pressure with a view to providing support; ditto
 - (3) That there be a tightening of the deadlines for central investigation into reviews; and ditto
 - (4) That staff be consulted in order to identify any undue pressures. ditto

CB67 Benchmarking of Complaints Handling Performance and Delivery of Value to Customers

- 67.1 The Head of Corporate Services presented in conjunction with the Head of Consumer Relations a joint report which advised members of comparative performance in relation to complaints handling and costs and value delivered to customers.

67.2 CCWater were in the strong position of achieving tangible benefits of over £130 million and financial redress of £1.76 million in last year alone compared to CCWater's costs of about £6 million.

67.3 CCWater had also improved its performance in relation to complaint handling and action had been taken to achieve higher consumer satisfaction scores. This action was already resulting in improved figures for levels of consumer satisfaction.

67.4 There was a need to identify other bodies against which CCWater could benchmark performance. Suggestions included the Legal Complaints Service, Ombudsman Services and Local Government.

AGREED: That the report be noted and attempts made to identify other comparable services.

Heads of
Corporate
Services
and
Consumer
Relations

CB68 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Welsh Ministers

68.1 The draft MOU was submitted for approval. Similar Memoranda had already been agreed with Defra and Ofwat.

68.2 The MOU was required under Section 27B of the Water Industry Act 1991 as amended by the Water Act 2003.

AGREED: That the MOU with Welsh Ministers be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the Memorandum on behalf of CCWater.

CB69 Inset Appointments

69.1 Sir James Perowne outlined the arrangements to deal with inset applications centrally and sought the agreement of the other Regional and Wales Chairs to the proposals.

AGREED: That the proposals be agreed subject to provision being made for the input of local knowledge into the process.

CB70 Urgent Business Sub-Committee

70.1 In view of the urgent business that may arise between Board meetings the Chair proposed that a Sub-Committee be established with full delegated powers to act, in the interests of increasing the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.

AGREED: (1) That an Urgent Business Sub-Committee be established with full delegated powers to act on behalf of the Board consisting of:

Board Sec.

- Chair
- Chief Executive
- Sir James Perowne
- Mike Barnes

(2) Should any member of the Sub-Committee not be

available for consultation then the remaining members be empowered to take the necessary action;

- (3) Members of the Board were to be circulated with the details of any action taken as soon as practicable thereafter and the action taken was to be the subject of a formal report to the next available meeting of the Board. Board Sec.

CB71 Guidelines issued by the Cabinet Office dated 12 January 2009: Attendance at Party Conferences

- 71.1 New guidelines had been issued relating to the attendance of Board members and staff of non-departmental public bodies at Party Conferences. These guidelines were circulated for information. CCWater is satisfied that, based on its proposals for attendance at conferences, there would be no difficulty in complying with the guidelines.

AGREED: That the guidelines be noted.

CB72 Decisions made in Private Session on 2 March 2009

- 72.1 A number of Board members had been unable to attend the Board's first session in private the day before and therefore the Chair recommended that the decisions made yesterday be adopted by the Board today.

AGREED: That the decisions made yesterday be adopted and approved by the Board.

CB73 Resolution to Move into Private Session

AGREED: That pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, representatives of the press and other members of the public be excluded from the Board meeting in private session, having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, publicity on which would be prejudicial to the public interest.

End of Session